

line of biam woik which was to be hers was becoming clear. According to her own account, it was environment, far more than any native faculty, that impelled her to take up and equip herself for the craft of a social investigator.

"I had neither aptitude nor liking for much of the technique of sociology, some would say for the vital parts of it. I had, for instance, no gifts for that lapid leading and judgment of original documents, which is indispensable to the historian, though by sheer persistency and long practice I acquired this faculty. And whilst I could plan out an admirable system of note-taking, the actual execution of the plan was, owing to an inveterate tendency to paraphrase extracts I intended to copy, not to mention an irredeemably illegible hand-writing, a wearisome imitation to me. As for the use of figures, whether mathematical or statistical, I might as well have attempted to turn water into wine."

These are defects, but she had also qualities she does not mention—intellectual curiosity, imagination of a special kind, persistency, and a very strong impulse towards self-expression, which, in the lack of any tinge of purely artistic feeling, could find no outlet in art or craft. Poetry was, in the strict sense, a sealed book the form had to be "translated" before she could get at its meaning, the absence of any real concern with either painting or music is a notable gap in her picture of the dense world she lived in. The air of that world was, on the other hand, thick with questioning about social relations, economic assumptions, and political actions. Social reform was not only in the air it was the substance of her circumstances.

and her
surroundings at this stage
As a London hostess, she constantly met and
argued with
prominent politicians, writers, economists and
scientists on
their own ground "A rather hard and
learned woman,
with a clear and analytic mind"—that was the
impression
she made, at this stage, on a keen observer
The angle of
her interest was rather special she brought a
point of view